

MINUTES OF HORSMONDEN PARISH COUNCIL
ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

HELD IN HORSMONDEN VILLAGE HALL ON MONDAY 18th MAY 2015

REFRESHMENTS FROM 7.00PM MEETING STARTING AT 7.30P.M.

Present: Cllr March (Chair)
Councillors Stevens, Davis, Russell, Hughes, Isaacs and Stanton.

In attendance: Lucy Noakes (Clerk)
26 members of the public
Cllr McDermott (TWBC)

Declarations of Interest: Declarations of pecuniary and non-pecuniary interests in accordance with the Code of Conduct were invited. None were received.

1. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Cllr King (KCC)

Mike Clemson, Isobel and Kevin Kerrigan, Bill Cheesman.

Cllr March wished to have recorded the Council's thanks to Bill Cheesman who had unfortunately had to retire from the Council for health related reasons after 19 years service to the Council. She also announced the retirement of Sean Lawrence from the Council and thanked him for his time on the Council. Unfortunately Cllr Lawrence had resigned owing to pressures of work. The vacancies would be announced in the normal way with the statutory notice advertising the vacancies, followed by an advertisement from the Parish Council and interviews to fill the casual vacancies, if an election were not called.

2.

GUEST SPEAKERS – Teresa Young- Senior Resilience officer (KCC) & Denise Haylett -Facilities and Business Manager (TWBC) – regarding Community Emergency Planning.

Teresa Young introduced herself as part of the Kent Resilience Team, which is made up of category 1&2 responders under the Civil Contingencies Act, who work on the County Risk Register. The risks in Kent are in three main categories, flood fuel and flu. The team deal with all sorts of risks which can cause evacuation. The Kent resilience team consists of Kent Police, Kent Fire and Rescue, the Environment Agency, the Met office and the NHS, all of whom work together. Examples were given of various instances locally where people had been evacuated from their homes and the part which the Kent resilience team had played in finding a suitable temporary welfare centre for these people until their homes could be made safe again.

Denise Haylett from TWBC explained that she was mainly involved in the setting up of welfare centres to provide temporary relief from those who had been evacuated in emergencies. She said that she was hoping to use Horsmonden's emergency plan as a role model for other parishes in the surrounding area to show them how they can help themselves in the event of an emergency. Cllr Russell told the parish how he and other councillors had been working on the plan for over one year and had produced a number of drafts based on the KF& R template. The group hoped to

have a final version in place by the end of the year. The plan includes a lot of information and contacts and will be available to TWBC and KF&R in an emergency. The group hope to circulate a letter later in the year asking parishioners to let them know if they can offer any kind of assistance, or equipment in such an incidence. Cllr Russell thanked members of the group for their hard work and time given to what they had achieved so far.

Mr Mills asked if any funding was available to purchase resources for the welfare centres. It was explained that KCC have an emergency store of supplies , like beds, TV's and radios for communications. However parishes themselves could supply rest centres and perhaps other valuable to resources. KCC would pay for the use of halls as rest centres.

PCSO Dave Jenkins– Local Crime

PCSO Jenkins introduced himself as the new PCSO for Horsmonden, Goudhurst, Lamberhurst and Brenchley and Matfield. He lists the crime figures since January 2015: 1 dwelling burglary, 4 criminal damages, 3 thefts, 1 arson, 1 class B drugs pos, and 1 assault.

PCSO Jenkins alerted parishioners to the fact that there had been reports of a car with an Irish number plate acting suspiciously in the area . There had also been reports of a suspicious person(s) looking through windows as well as dog thefts in the area. PCSO Jenkins reminded those present that non urgent crimes should be reported to 101, whilst those witnessing urgent crimes or needing immediate assistance should dial 999.

As PCSO he explained that whenever possible he would try to be highly visible in the parish acting as a deterrent to crime. He would be speaking at the primary school to help educate children and would look at the incident reports for the area to see where he could assist with crime prevention and reassurance.

3. PUBLIC SESSION.

Mr Dicketts (Chairman of the Village Vision Traffic group) gave a report to the parish. He explained that the group had worked on two requests coming from Village Vision: a bus shelter - which could not be placed without encroachment on to private property; and calming traffic at the crossroads at the centre of the village.

Lots of ideas had been looked at for the cross roads including zigzag lines and yellow lines however the risk was not considered great enough to require double yellow lines, and this would make it awkward to park at the shops which would not be popular amongst most parishioners.

Speed watch had been resurrected in partnership with Brenchley and Matfield Parish council. Results from Speed watch and other traffic monitoring had shown that the 2 main concerns for speeding traffic were the Lamberhurst Road and the Brenchley road. In October 2014 Steven Noad from KHS had come to look at the problems and Mr Dicketts had asked for a long term proposal for traffic calming through the village. However results from this had been very slow and there were as yet no firm details of what could be done to assist. The interactive sign on the Goudhurst road was now working properly and the white lines had been repainted at the crossroads, thanks to campaigning from Cllr's McDermott (TWBC) and March. Mr Dicketts thanked the traffic group for the work they had done over the last year.

Mrs Davies wished to speak about the proposal for 28 new homes at Bassett's Farm. She said that not only would the proposed development cause all the usual potential issues such as affecting school places, overcrowding at the doctors surgery, utility provision, new entrance and access roads on to the Goudhurst Road, but it also presented a parking problem for the residents of Station cottages who had no driveways or rear access. The owners of these cottages had historically been permitted to park at Bassett's. Mrs Davies said that parking in the road outside the cottages had proved very dangerous and

caused several nasty accidents over the years, therefore the residents tend to avoid this. She had raised this point with the developers and would continue to speak to them about this.

Mrs Davies said that she was not against the site being properly developed as at present it was neglected and unused, however she believed the current proposal was for too many properties and the access and crossing had not been thought through properly. The pavement to the village is very narrow and only one person wide in places. The plans meant that someone accessing the village centre would have to cross over the road several times in order to get to the shops.

Cllr March said that the Parish Council had not yet received any plans to comment on and could not therefore give an opinion on the proposals; however she hoped that when the plans come before the council, parishioners would come to the planning meeting and make their views heard before the parish council and to TWBC. Cllr March also went on to say that the site was outside the village envelope, and did not therefore have any automatic rights of development. Village Vision had also indicated that if developed, parishioners wished to see the site used for sheltered housing. TWBC had fulfilled its obligation for housing quotas through their current plans and Horsmonden was not therefore under any obligation to take on more housing, especially not outside the village envelope. Willard's Place had fulfilled the current housing needs of the village up until the next Housing needs survey in 2017.

Cllr March also mentioned that in 2017 the Borough council would hold a new consultation on housing needs for 2026 onwards which may demonstrate a further borough wide need.

Robin Morton asked if the Parish Councillors knew anything about lines which were sometimes put across the roads with black boxes at the verge side. It was determined that these are for traffic monitoring purposes and can be put there with KHS permission by private companies acting on behalf of individuals, often for planning reasons. Figures collected in this way by private companies do not have to be made public or shared. These monitors can measure axle length and speed and can therefore determine the type of traffic using a road. The parish Council had carried out monitoring of this sort in 2012 and 2013. The figures from this had indicated that the number of HGVs moving through the village was lower than expected.

Ken Mills asked to speak as a Trustee of the Sports club. He wanted to know if the Parish Council might consider granting monies to the sports club to assist with maintenance of the sports ground which was used by a lot of villagers. Cllr March asked if parishioners could give a show of hands to see how many people were in favour of the PC granting a couple of £100's to help towards the maintenance of the sports ground in future years - 25 parishioners voted in favour, one against and one abstained. The Parish Council will look at providing a grant in next year's annual precept - 2016/17

4. **MINUTES OF THE 2014 ANNUAL PARISH MEETING**

The minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 19th May 2014 were recommended for approval by Robin Morton, seconded by Caroline Davis, vote carried, and duly signed by the Chairman of the Parish Council.

Appendix 1 of the 2014 annual minutes was recommended for approval by Ken Mills, seconded by Andrew Mills, carried and signed by the Chairman of the Parish Council.

Appendix 2 of the 2014 annual minutes was recommended for approval by Andrew Mills, seconded by Ken Mills, carried and signed by the Chairman of the Parish Council.

5. **CHAIRMAN'S REPORT**

Cllr March thanked the Council members for all their hard work throughout the year and each member then took it in turns to explain what their role had been over the last year.

Cllr Davis: Vice Chairman, member of the Finance committee (carrying out the Annual Risk assessment for the Council), Emergency planning group (liaison with TWBC), village vision since

2012(helping to put together the booklet, and now involved with traffic group),Sports club liaison, Social club liaison, Christmas lights with Cllr Stevens, Public toilets (refurbishment and replanting the front garden there.)

Cllr Russell: Chair to the Finance committee (looking at the annual budget and precept and reporting to full council, monitoring the precept, making sure expenditure is in line with the budget) dealing with employment contract and issues, member of the Emergency planning group, member of the Village Hall management committee and trustee of the Village Hall as well as Treasurer, involved in refurbishment of the public toilets(meeting with contractors and Council), monitoring the water consumption at the toilets , facilitation of computer training sessions, assisting with putting up festive lighting around the green at Christmas and for festival weekend, litter picking and other practical jobs.

Cllr Isaacs: Joined the parish council just over a year ago. Member of the planning committee, school liaison contact, involved with village vision youth group liaison, involved in looking at future plans and up keep for parish owned buildings, using his expertise as a building contractor.

Cllr Stevens: Dealing with Highways matters such as pot holes, over hanging hedges and trees, looking after and distributing salt for roads in bad weather, custodian of the Village green ensuring maintenance and use of the green, member of the village hall committee (Cllr Stevens chaired the committee for a number of years and was involved in the building of the new kitchen and toilets at the front) involved with maintenance and checking of the play area, member of the planning committee (keen on keeping employment with it the village where possible), putting up and maintaining the Christmas and other festive lighting, member of the emergency planning group.

Cllr Stanton: Joined the Parish Council less than a year ago. Has worked a lot with the Emergency planning group drafting the templates for this and bringing in her experience from working in the city, to the group. Assisted with the litter picking in March.

Cllr Hughes: Now the second longest serving councillor on the current council. Has helped with Village Vision initiatives, in particular the campaign for high speed broadband. Involved in speed watch volunteering to run joint sessions with Brenchley and Matfield volunteers. Has also been involved in the liaison group for the Horsefair on the Green.

At this point Cllr Davis conveyed the Council's thanks to the Clerk for her administration over the past year and to the Chair, Cllr March for her leadership over the past year.

Cllr March then went on to mention the Love Where we live Awards for 2015, which are run by TWBC and Town and Country Housing. The parish Council had received several suggestions for awards which it would follow up: The Walking with the Wounded Bike Ride organisers for Best group Award; Pauline Bell for individual Hero Award; and John Couchman for Life time achievement award. Cllr March reminded people that they could make nominations individually by following the instructions on the TWBC website, or if they had any further suggestions they could recommend people for the Parish Council to nominate.

Cllr March explained that the Council had been looking at the possibility of putting a shelter of some kind on the green which could double up as a youth shelter and bus shelter, as well as being used for picnics etc. There were various comments from the parish about this ranging from worries about vandalism to the shelter once installed, to positioning on the green without blocking the view

of the green from the road. Cllr March asked those present to cast a non-binding vote, to which the majority of those present voted in favour of a 5m hexagonal shelter in wood. Cllr March said that the Parish Council would now take this proposal forward to a meeting and look at the careful positioning of the shelter.

6. **PRECEPT FOR 2015/16 AND ACCOUNTS 2014/2015**

Cllr Russell explained that the Finance committee had carefully considered the condition of the three buildings which it owns. The roof of the Institute was being surveyed for the council to let them know its condition. The Village Hall was in good condition at the front, but it may be necessary to relocate the boiler and improve the storage and accommodation at the rear of the hall as this are was not in such good condition. The Public toilets had recently undergone a renovation and it was not therefore expected that any works would be needed there.

Village Vision initiatives included a possible shelter, and new street lighting. The parish Play area would need replacing in the future which would be very costly and needed to be saved up for over a long time. There were many other ongoing costs which had to be accounted for and looked at in detail each year so that the Council had funds to cover all eventualities. Cllr Russell explained that each item is looked at by the finance committee individually and a decision is made as to whether further funds must be raised in the precept.

The Account Summary – Appendix 1 - outlined the position of the Council at the end of the previous year 2014/15. It was proposed by Robert Dicketts and seconded By Andrew Mills, carried, that this be accepted as a true summary of the position.

Appendix 2 - Precept 2015/16 - was presented to those present and was proposed for acceptance by Robert Dicketts and seconded by Cllr Davis, carried.

Cllr March thanked everyone for attending the meeting. Ken Mills thanked the Parish Council and Cllr March for organising and running the meeting.

The Meeting ended at 9.36pm.